



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

LYNDO TIPPETT
SECRETARY

**North Carolina Board of Transportation
Environmental Planning and Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes for May 31, 2006**

A meeting of the Environmental Planning and Policy Committee (EPPC) was held May 31, 2006 at 8:30 AM in the Board Room (Room 150) of the Transportation Building. Board Member Nina Szlosberg chaired the meeting. Other Board of Transportation members that attended were:

Conrad Burrell
Mac Campbell
Bob Collier
Nancy Dunn

Douglas Galyon
Andrew Perkins
Nina Szlosberg
Lanny Wilson

Other attendees included:

Julie Hunkins
Joel Setzer
Jay Swain
Len Sanderson
Phil Harris
Andrew Sawyer
Berry Jenkins
Roy Shelton
Tim Johnson
Dan Thomas
Kari Metcalf
John Sullivan
Cheryl Teeters

Ehren Meister
Larry Goode
Marcus Wilner
Don Voelker
Jon Nance
Ken Pace
Amy Simes
Bob Andrews
Mike Mills
Daniel Keel
C.A. Gardner
Neil Lassiter
Don Lee

Shannon Lasater
Shirley Williams
Rob Hanson
Debbie Barbour
Pat Ivey
Steve Dewitt
Lori Kroll
Becky Luce-Clark
Lanny Wilson
Dr. Jeff Crowe
Dempsey Benton
Allen Pope

Ms. Szlosberg called the meeting to order and circulated the attendance sheet. Ms. Szlosberg accepted a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the May 2006 committee meeting. The minutes were approved as presented. Ms. Szlosberg opened by commenting that today's topic was the Geographic Information System (GIS) database, which would be presented by the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR), Mr. Dempsey Benton. Mr. Benton also serves as the Chair of the Interagency Leadership Team (ILT). To start, Ms. Szlosberg called on Mr. Sanderson to give perspective to the topic.

Mr. Sanderson introduced Dr. Jeff Crowe, Deputy Secretary for Archives and History from the Department of Cultural Resources, who serves on the ILT. Mr. Sanderson gave a reminder that at a previous meeting, he and Mr. Sullivan gave a presentation on the ILT. A group that was formed a couple of years ago and is comprised of senior leadership from 10 state and federal agencies; they were formed to work together on common goals that are beneficial to the state of North Carolina. Mr. Sanderson described the three goals of the ILT: (1) develop a robust, comprehensive GIS system; (2) integrate land use and transportation planning; and (3) improve Merger 01 process. Mr. Sanderson commented that Dempsey Benton would later provide a more detailed presentation on GIS. He noted that Mr. Benton's presentation would describe the business case for a GIS database, why it is important in the long and short term, the anticipated benefits and the return on investment. Mr. Sanderson turned the meeting over to Mr. Benton.

Mr. Benton began by describing the GIS business case that was developed by the Interagency Leadership Team. He noted that GIS provides the platform for good planning, which can make decision making more smooth through all of the key parts of the transportation program life cycle. MPOs and RPOs agree that with the high growth that is occurring across the state, as well as the need to provide transportation facilities to meet the needs on an increase population, GIS is a vital tool to provide consistent and up-to-date GIS data for analysis and decision-making. Mr. Benton emphasized the importance of the NEPA mantra – avoid, minimize, and mitigate. The key to avoiding and minimizing is knowing where the environment assets are, how they are impacted, and ways to avoid them -- all of which can be established through a robust, comprehensive GIS.

Mr. Benton introduced the Center for Geographic Information and Analysis (CGIA) as an existing statutory agency that is ready to provide support to implement this type of program. The development of this GIS database, which includes 171 data layers, would be phased over the next 5+ years. CGIA is operating the "North Carolina One Map" website, which is currently being used by over 90 state, federal, regional, and local agencies to share data.

Mr. Benton stated that the project cost to build data layers is estimated to be \$38.2M, most of which would go to private sectors to perform the data development for these data layers. \$4.7M would be needed for annual maintenance to keep the data current. Of this amount, \$4M would be given to the private sector.

The benefits of establishing and maintaining these GIS data layers include:

- Cost savings
- Current and reliable data for decision-making
- Improved decision making
- Productivity gains

Mr. Benton discussed digital aerial imagery as being one of the highest priority data layers. Currently there isn't a schedule for updating this information, primarily due to budget constraints. Local

governments fly respective jurisdictions on a period basis. State agencies only fly on an as needed basis. The GIS project will set a schedule for every 4 years, to ensure that maps are being updated regularly.

Stream mapping also is a high priority area. Through a hurricane recovery effort, the General Assembly provided funding to map streams within 20 counties in Western North Carolina. The stream maps of these counties were over 40 years old and inaccurate.

Both stream mapping and digital aerial imagery are just two of the highest cost GIS data layers. Some of the others more expensive data layers include:

- Surveyed Historic Properties
- Terrestrial Archeological Surveyed Areas
- Transportation: System and Non-System Road Network

Mr. Benton stated that there are 92 counties within North Carolina that currently provide parcel boundaries on a web based/Internet framework. The eight (8) counties that do not have this information have a more difficult time with projects. To include these remaining eight (8) counties, the cost is approximately \$3M.

In summary, Mr. Benton commented that the implementation of the GIS project will be on a multi-year implementation plan. The cost for the first year will be at \$9M, of which \$8M will be nonrecurring. The cost should go up and then back down over the 5+ years of implementation. Mr. Benton acknowledged that it is hard to talk about spending millions of dollars on a project that doesn't solve an immediate need. However, this project will provide a long-term return and improve the quality of our decision-making at the local, state and federal levels.

Ms. Szlosberg opened up the floor for questions.

Ms. Dunn asked what exactly is the amount that DOT is being asked for and what can we do as a Department to move this along more quickly? Ms. Dunn commented that this case seems similar to the presentation on updating and adding traffic signals across the state where we saved so much money. Mr. Benton stated there is currently no allocation of respective budgets for each agency for the development and maintenance of these data layers. The type of investment is a state government investment that goes beyond a particular department. In this case, the state as a whole is the customer.

Ms. Dunn replied by asking if that meant the funding would be done in the Legislative budget, and Mr. Benton replied that this is what he anticipates. Ms. Dunn asked where that left us in terms of securing funding? Mr. Benton stated that a package was submitted in mid-March, but it is not currently included in the Executive budget proposal. Ms. Dunn asked if the other agencies are prepared, if necessary, to take funds from their budgets? Mr. Benton responded that if we talk about taking money out of an agency's continuing budget, it is difficult to determine how much to take.

Ms. Szlosberg asked if one approach would be to ask the Legislature to include the GIS project as a line item in their budget, outside of the departments continuing budgets. Mr. Benton commented that they are going through the budget process now and that the package is available. If the House wants to add some part of that to their expansion budget mark up, that is one alternative. A second alternative would be to engage in dialogue with the State Budget Office for end of the year carry forward funding. This could give us up to \$4M to start the project. A third plan would be to wait for 2007-2008.

Ms. Dunn asked if a resolution from this committee and the Board of Transportation would be appropriate and/or helpful? Mr. Benton noted that he believed it would be beneficial. Mr. Benton made mentioned that Secretary Tippet, Secretary Ross, Secretary Evans, and Secretary Fain have reviewed this and sent forward their encouragement for consideration.

Ms. Szlosberg read an excerpt from the GIS business case report, "If GIS were used as an effective screening tool to determine which projects should go into the Merger process, a cost avoidance of \$3,050,000 could be realized." According to this, Ms. Szlosberg acknowledged that we could have paid for the entire project within one year, had we had the system in place. However, she noted that any resolution should be very clear that the money to fund the GIS initiative would not be solely from DOT, since this is a state project and benefits local, state and federal government, as well as other entities. Ms. Dunn made a motion to put a resolution together to support the funding of the GIS project in the Legislative budget as a line item. The motion was seconded and approved.

Ms. Szlosberg adjourned the meeting. The next meeting of the Environmental Planning and Policy Committee will be Wednesday, July 12, 2006 at 8:30 AM in the Board Room (Room 150) of the Transportation Building.

NS/ct